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ABSTRACT

The document examines three kinds of human relations training techniques and their possible application in preparing American personnel for the cross-cultural aspects of overseas assignments. The objective is to describe each technique, examine it with respect to possible use in area training, and summarize experimental evidence of its effectiveness, as well as to develop tentative suggestions for adapting each or all three for area training and integration into an ongoing program. Section I of the document states the problem: differing cultural premises and beliefs underlying more obvious cultural characteristics form major obstacles to the effective accomplishment of missions abroad. Section II discusses human relations training as a means of solving this problem, presenting objectives, process, necessary conditions, and three techniques (training groups or T-groups, role playing, and case study). Sections III through V examine each technique, covering process, effectiveness, past applications in area training, and speculations on the use and potential value. The final section offers six conclusions and implications: (1) human relations training can make an impact when used with foresight by an experienced trainer, (2) training is costly and exact cost/effectiveness data are impossible to define, (3) techniques differ in potential, but T-group is most powerful for bringing to awareness covert implications of one's behavior, (4) varying the three techniques is appropriate for most trainees and job requirements, (5) effective training involves a total organization or team and takes place overseas after a month or two, and (6) training can be enriched by incorporating foreign nationals. (CK)

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An Analysis of Human Relations Training and Its Implications for Overseas Performance

by

Robert J. Foster and Jack Danielian

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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FOREWORD

The objective of the research by the Human Resources Research Office described in this report is to explore existing knowledge and experience in the area of human relations training to determine its relevance for preparing personnel for the cross-cultural aspects of overseas assignments. It is believed that several techniques which have been used for a number of years in management and leadership development programs in the United States may be of value in area training because, in both situations, many difficulties can be viewed as arising from differences in values, beliefs, and ways of life.

Use of human relations training is increasing, especially in Peace Corps and Agency for International Development training programs. The sections of this report that survey research on the effectiveness of the techniques and their past uses in area training are based primarily on information available through mid-1965.

This study was undertaken under Work Sub-Unit AREA I, Survey of Selected Concepts and Techniques for Area Training, which forms part of a larger research effort, Work Unit AREA, Development of Concepts and Techniques for Area Training. The research is being conducted by HumRRO Division No. 7 (Language and Area Training), under Dr. Arthur J. Hoehn, Director of Research, at Alexandria, Virginia.

Dr. Alfred J. Kraemer was Unit Leader of Work Unit AREA during the planning and literature review phases of this study, and Dr. Edward C. Stewart served as Unit Leader during the period of report preparation. SP4 Roger Nelson assisted in the literature review. Dr. Jose Armilla assisted in preparing the sections dealing with the rationale for human relations training and a general overview of costs and benefits.

Dr. Charles Seashore, of the National Training Laboratories, reviewed the draft and made a number of helpful suggestions. The article, "A New Look at Management Development," by Dr. Leland P. Bradford, was adapted and incorporated in the section on "Human Relations Training"; permission for this use was granted by Dr. Bradford and the Society for Advancement of Management.

Previous Work Unit AREA publications include: Examples of Cross-Cultural Problems Encountered by Americans Working Overseas: An Instructor's Handbook, by Robert J. Foster, May 1965; Cross-Cultural Problems of U.S. Army Personnel in Laos and Their Implications for Area Training, Research Memorandum by Alfred J. Kraemer and Edward C. Stewart, September 1964 (For Official Use Only); "American Advisors Overseas," by Edward C. Stewart, Military Review, February 1965.

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Meredith P. Crawford
Director
Human Resources Research Office

The Problem

Major obstacles to the effective accomplishment of missions abroad are the culturally different patterns of thought and behavior of Americans and host people. This tends to be the conclusion drawn from recent studies of both military and nonmilitary overseas assignments. These factors are not of the obvious sort, such as differences in dress, gestures, or food, which tend to be emphasized because of their exotic appeal. Rather they are the basic cultural premises and beliefs that underlie the more obvious cultural characteristics. There is a growing recognition that success in overseas operations often requires continued close social interaction with indigenous personnel, and that training oriented to interpersonal relations and designed to develop awareness of such underlying assumptions and values is needed.

To date, the most concerted effort to offer training in interaction skills at this interpersonal level has been in business and industry in the context of management and supervisory problems. Like an American overseas, an American in his own country is likely to see a situation in terms of his own occupation, status, personal experiences, and sub-cultural exposure. And it is these differences in values and assumptions which are typically found to be the basis of many conflicts, misunderstandings, and problems in the industrial setting. In addition, of course, the specific cultural disparities are greater and far more frequently encountered overseas—hence the greater need for relevant training.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate existing knowledge and experience in the area of human relations training, especially the rationale of the training and its uses and applications, in order to determine its relevance for training Americans to interact effectively with indigenous persons in overseas settings

Summary of Human Relations Training Techniques

Human relations training has most often been used in unicultural (in the nation sense) business and industrial settings. More recently, attempts have been made to apply the concepts of human relations training in area programs designed to prepare American personnel for overseas assignments. On the basis of both the scientific literature and interviews with personnel engaged in this type of training, the nature and rationale of the human relations approach to training are developed in this report and the overall impact is assessed.

Human relations training refers to a variety of techniques as well as to an overall approach to training. Three techniques that seem especially suited to area training are the T-group, role-playing, and case study:

The *T-group* (training group) is an initially unstructured group of perhaps a dozen participants who meet without a pre-established agenda, rules of procedure, or division of labor. A trainer functions as a resource person to help the group members analyze and understand their own and each other's behavior, rather than in the traditional role of instructor or discussion leader.

In contrast to this unstructured situation, *role-playing* typically provides a semi-structured situation in which the participants assume designated roles. Situations and roles are selected to provide a learning experience to the participants and/or an audience. The prescribed details of the roles vary, but role-playing differs from dramatic acting primarily in that a verbatim script is not provided and the "actor" is usually projecting himself into a generalized role such as that of supervisor or advisor.

The *case study* method involves a problem situation consistently presented from the perspective of one of the individuals in the script. The case, or problem situation, is discussed in a group setting with the members making observations, raising questions, and offering solutions. While T-group and role-playing provide emotional experiences by means of face-to-face contacts, the case study tends to be *relatively* more concerned with thinking *per se*, and is geared more exclusively to the cultivation of cognitive skills in analyzing problems and issues in communication.

Conclusions and Implications

(1) Despite the sketchy and often technically inadequate nature of the evaluative research cited, an overall impression emerges that human relations training can make an impact on attitudes and interpersonal orientations in unicultural settings when used with foresight by experienced trainers. There is reason to believe that such training may also be a useful adjunct to existing language and area study programs for preparation of overseas personnel, both military and nonmilitary.

(2) All human relations training is costly in terms of time and personnel required. Exact cost/effectiveness data are impossible to derive because criteria for change are ill-defined.

(3) Human relations techniques differ with respect to their potential for bringing to awareness the covert or censored implications of one's behavior. For this purpose, the T-group is considered to be the most powerful because of the sustained and intimate contact involved among the participants.

(4) By varying the admixtures of T-group, role-playing, and case study (or of all three, together with more conventional techniques currently in use), a level of training appropriate for most trainee populations and most job requirements can probably be instituted. Although considerations for making such decisions have been suggested, the individual trainer must determine for himself the particular combination of strategies and techniques optimal for the job training effort confronting him. Especial attention should be given to ways of using these techniques to make preceding or succeeding blocks of area instruction more meaningful, realistic, and behaviorally relevant. A good training program is likely to be a judicious mixture of traditional topics in area study *and* interpersonally oriented training focused on the analysis of culturally derived assumptions and frames of reference.

(5) Experience in the United States indicates that training involving a total organization or team is likely to be more effective than pulling isolated individuals into a training program. A suggested procedure to avoid regression after training is to have the training program take place overseas *after* the trainee has been immersed in the culture for a month or two.

(6) Human relations training for overseas work can probably be enriched by incorporating foreign nationals into the training groups. T-groups of mixed nationalities, for example, may represent a microcosm of a cross-cultural encounter that can provide an in-depth cultural learning experience for the participants. Under skillful guidance, such a strategy may integrate the substantive content of cultural learning with the situational requirements for behavioral change. In addition, exposure to an unstructured training milieu may "immunize" the trainee against adverse reactions to the very real ambiguities of actual overseas situations.

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An Analysis of Human Relations Training and Its Implications for Overseas Performance

INTRODUCTION

Problem of Cross-Cultural Relations

Military personnel are being sent in ever-increasing numbers to developing nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In their role of advisors, technical agents, or trainers in various types of military missions, they often come into daily close contact with indigenous personnel whose speech, dress, eating habits, behavioral style, and underlying cultural values are vastly different from their own.

What knowledge or skills contribute to success in such overseas operations? At least three categories can be defined: technical competence, area knowledge and language skills, and communication and interpersonal skills. The first two are basic, concrete, and clearly relevant. Without technical knowledge and at least a modicum of area and language information, personnel engaged in military advisory efforts and related operations would no doubt be sorely handicapped. These areas are receiving adequate stress in current training programs and do not require further attention here.

The third category, communication and interpersonal skills, represents a type of capability which has received far less attention. These components of performance are, to be sure, difficult entities to define operationally, and the extent to which they contribute to ultimate success in overseas missions is currently unknown. However, there has recently been a growing realization that success in operations involving training and advisory functions in less developed areas of the world and in widely different cultural settings requires effective and sustained social interaction with the indigenous personnel involved.[1]

A parallel to communication problems encountered by military personnel abroad may be drawn with problems experienced by business, industry, and government on overseas assignments. Studies of such assignments generally indicate that cultural differences in the way people think and feel are important barriers to the effective accomplishment of the mission. These studies, notably those of the Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University (5, 6), have shown that the technical and administrative aspects of the work are almost invariably affected by cross-cultural factors. Quoting Cleveland, Mangone, and Adams (6),

> The whole of American culture seems designed to make it difficult for Americans to move comfortably in many foreign cultures. We are taught from early youth that clear thinking and lucid exposition are very important, that the syllogism is a reliable form of logic. We treat 'equality' as an object of worship; we believe that all men have similar rights and obligations. A horizontal 'man-to-man' mutuality is better, we think,

[1]This view is also evident in recommendations made at various military research symposia. The necessity for research on culture-contact problems has been emphasized in a symposium on counterinsurgency sponsored by the RAND Corporation (1), in a symposium on social science research and the Army's limited war mission sponsored by Special Operations Research Office (2), and in several recent conferences (World-wide Psychological Operations Conference, Fort McNair, Washington, 1963, 3, and Eleventh Annual Conference on Human Factors Research and Development, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 1965, 4).

> than any vertical ruler-subject relationship. In all these elements of 'culture' other peoples [may] start from different premises. Clarity and cold-blooded logic are less appreciated in some societies than they are in the United States. Equality is often held to be a social vice, not a virtue. Informality is positively offensive in cultures that set great store by the elaborate formalities by which people do business with each other.

The critical point is that these cross-cultural factors are not of the obvious sort, such as differences of dress, gestures, or food which tend to get emphasized because of their exotic appeal. Rather they have to do with basic cultural premises and thought patterns which pervasively intrude upon everyday behavior and yet do so in such a subtle way that they tend to escape awareness.

In general, systematic observations of how cultural factors affect everyday interpersonal communication and interaction are not available. The processes underlying the technical assistance relationship are seldom mentioned in reports of administrators and returning practitioners. Apparently the specialists have not been sufficiently sensitized to such processes to detect the diffuse cultural confrontations involved and to trace existing conflicts or problems to such origins. A few notable exceptions are Cleveland and Mangone (5), Cleveland et al. (6), Hall and Whyte (7), Lundstedt (8), and reports put out by the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (9, 10).

Training Problem

It is widely acknowledged and recognized that there is a need for the development of communication and interaction skills among overseas personnel. The principles or strategies of training that can be brought to bear on the problem warrant consideration.

In most training efforts, for both military and nonmilitary agencies sending large numbers of personnel abroad, the prevailing emphasis has been on the country or area information-giving approach. Thus, geographical and political descriptions of the host country, cultural and historical descriptions of the people, and a sketch of the organizational structure of the American agency in the particular country are generally provided at some stage of the training.

Until recently, the elusive human relation factors involved in work abroad have been minimized. Even those trainers who have become aware of the action (real-life) consequences of unrecognized cultural commitments have been without the wherewithal (in terms of training techniques and materials) to bring their awareness to bear on the trainees in a way which would be relevant to the trainee's personal internalized style of functioning.

Trainers, psychologists, and educators have long known that knowledge which is not seen as immediately relevant to one's job, or inferences about behavior which do not have a clearly perceived referent, tend to remain unintegrated and not properly "used" by the trainee. Thus, lecturing to a group of trainees about American predispositions toward achievement orientation may have very little impact on the way the advisor actually functions or programs are conducted in other countries; its personal relevance to the individual trainee has not been demonstrated.

How then can behavior of which the trainee is relatively unaware, but which is judged salient to overseas performance, be highlighted for a trainee? Here, again, experienced trainers and educators have known that an atmosphere which encourages active trainee interaction and high group involvement, when combined with a deliberate group-enforced attempt to suspend or relax habitual

modes of thinking and judging, can lead to new awareness and more efficient and flexible use of one's resources. Such training often requires unlearning of old habits before new ones can be acquired.

An analogy may be drawn to "unlearning" of old habits of movement before newer, more functional ones can be developed. The analogy should not be pursued too far, however, because basic cultural commitments in thinking and philosophy always have a deep emotional component which requires constant attention.

To date, the most concerted effort to offer training in interaction skills at this personal level has been made in industry and business in the context of management and supervisory problems.[1] The variety of techniques used and the overall approach have been referred to as human relations training. Like an American overseas, an American in his own country is likely to see a situation in terms of his own perspective—a set of assumptions and values that is largely a product of his own sub-cultural exposure. In both instances, many difficulties can be viewed as arising primarily from the incongruities in values, beliefs, and ways of life which reflect in turn differences in occupation, socioeconomic status, cultural background, or other affiliation factors. The difference, of course, is that the cultural differences are greater and far more pervasive overseas; hence the greater need for relevant training.

If the above reasoning is sound, then human relations training may be a useful adjunct to existing language and area study programs for preparation of personnel planning to work overseas, both military and nonmilitary.

Purpose of the Report

Many techniques used in human relations training can probably be adapted for preparing people for overseas assignment. The purpose of this report is to describe three of these techniques—training groups (T-groups), role-playing and case studies—and to examine each with respect to use possible in area training. Experimental evidence of the effectiveness of each technique will be summarized and tentative suggestions developed for adapting the techniques for area training and for integrating them into ongoing programs.

HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING

The major objective in human relations training has been to develop the ability to communicate and become effective in one's behavior with others rather than to teach about human relations.[2] The same objective is shared by people engaged in area training. They stress the ability to work in different cultures rather than merely knowledge about different cultures.

It seems reasonable to assume that, to be effective overseas, the American needs skills to diagnose the problems of communication and interpersonal strains that may be accentuated by cultural differences. He needs to develop self-awareness, both as an individual and as an American, to enable him to recognize

[1]The importance of the human relations and communicative aspects of management and supervision has been increasingly recognized (cf. **11, 12, 13, 14**).

[2]The use of the term "human relations training" in this report is limited to a concept of training usually referred to as "laboratory training" or "experience-based training." Most organizational training programs and college courses in human relations teach *about* human relations principles and frequently do not meet the criterion of what is referred to here as human relations training.

how and why he thinks and feels differently from those with whom he is working. He must become increasingly sensitive to the reactions of non-Americans and the impact he has on them. Above all, he needs to develop an attitude or perspective that will enable him to evaluate accurately, without an ethnocentric or egocentric bias, the ambiguous events which will inevitably confront him.

In general, human relations training attempts to induce the individual to change in the way he views himself, understands and respects others, and interacts in a work situation. Achieving this objective in area training means decreasing the resistance with which the individual faces change and also reducing the anxiety and frustration with which he faces the uncertainties and pitfalls of the overseas situation.

The Learning Process

Basically, the problem of encouraging learning and changing is to let the individual complete the process of "unfreezing-moving-refreezing." The process is cyclical and consists of three phases. The first is helping the individual "unfreeze" his present level of being and behaving. No matter how much the trainee may verbalize his desire to learn, he brings to the training situation some ambivalence and resistance to learning and change. Change in behaving is always threatening to the individual; it raises questions of personal inadequacy and brings anxieties about failure and ridicule. The unfreezing process involves some sort of self-confrontation, bringing to the surface the individual's resistance to growth and change. His previous equilibrium must be disturbed in order to make him ready to change. Unfreezing is likely to occur when the individual directly experiences an event that will suspend his habitual modes of perceiving long enough for him to gain insight into his own assumptions and behavior, and to become aware of them. Only then will he decide to undergo the difficult task of relearning.

The "moving" phase refers to the actual process of learning new attitudes and behaviors. The direction of change is presented. The individual perceives this alternative, clearly discovers for himself its merits, and moves along this path to a more effective level of behavior than that maintained in the past.

In the third phase, the individual must "refreeze" his new level of being and behaving so that regression to the previous mode of behavior will not readily occur. Training rearranges the situation so that the new behavior can be tested without threatening his self-esteem, and so that the new behavior finds support from those with whom he works.

When the American arrives overseas, he must recognize the forces of resistance described above which might tend to handicap his development of new behavior. Occasionally, inept "patterns" of dealing with fellow Americans and with hosts may be applied vigorously and rigidly in defensive reaction to the ambiguity and frustration of overseas operations. One of the chief purposes of an effective training program is to help the individual learn how to continue learning from daily experiences encountered in real life situations. This, basically, is developing a continuous cycle of "unfreezing-moving-refreezing."

Conditions for Effective Training[1]

Accomplishing temporary change in behavior, attitudes, and ideas in the protected environment of the training situation is usually far easier than maintaining

[1]This description of the conditions for effective human relations training, although somewhat modified by the authors of this report, is taken essentially from Bradford (15). Permission to make use of the copyrighted material has been granted. Bradford's rationale for human relations training is shared by most human relations experts.

the changed behavior in the midst of the stress and strain of a life situation. An essential part of any training, therefore, entails helping the individual to recognize the probable forces of resistance to his behavior in the overseas situation and to build ways of maintaining or refreezing this change. Effective training is a matter of design in which a combination of learning experiences, interacting with each other, is carefully articulated so that maximum encouragement for change and maintenance of change is present. Experience in human relations training over the past 15 years has suggested certain conditions which need to be built into the training design.

Exposure of Behavior. The first condition is that the learner needs to participate in an experience so that his behavior is actually involved. When the individual has exposed his own behavior before his colleagues, whether in a training situation or not, he has exposed it to himself, often for the first time. He has begun to see through the eyes of others what his behavior has looked like and what he has done. Therefore, he is often strongly motivated to do something about it. In studying human relations and behavior, analysis and experimentation with one's own behavior is necessary.

Until the individual's behavior has actually been exposed to himself and to others in the learning situation, there is little likelihood of real change. As reactions from the group to the consequences of his behavior appear, he faces the need either to become defensive and reject them, or to consider them in making any decisions about his own personal ways of doing things. It is at this point that the trainer helps the learner face his ambivalence and resistance to change.

Feedback. Experience must be followed by careful analysis of results so that the person may be helped to see the discrepancy between what he actually accomplished and what he thought he accomplished or wished to accomplish. A training staff and training group provide a feedback system that enables the person to see himself as others see him.

The process of giving and receiving feedback is a complex one. Each person builds a screen to filter out or explain away reactions which threaten his self-image. The individual needs to be helped to reduce defensiveness so that he can accept feedback (indicating the extent to which his behavior reached his target and the extent to which his target or goal was desirable). He needs help in recognizing non-verbal feedback signals and understanding the feelings behind people's statements.

Atmosphere. An accepting and supportive emotional climate for training is needed for two reasons. First, exposing one's behavior and receiving feedback are frequently painful. A climate which reduces defensiveness and creates an atmosphere of permissiveness opens the possibility of change and improvement. Without such a climate, the individual resists any implications of inadequacy, defends his present practices, and refuses to try new ways of behaving.

A second need for an adequate emotional climate is to give emotional support to the individual as he goes through the rather defenseless and awkward state of learning new ways of behaving.

Knowledge as a Map. Growth and change in the individual require the absorption of new knowledge. The problem is to make it available to the learner at the appropriate time, after he has made a commitment for learning and sees a need for change. Learning new information will be greatly facilitated by the timing of its presentation and by the organization of specific items around general patterns or "cognitive maps." Awareness of such "maps" enables the learner to increase his flexibility in categorizing new information since more

than one conceptual framework is available to him. In addition, he will be able to generalize and apply the appropriate behavior to disparate situations.

Experimentation and Practice. Learning and change call for opportunities for experimentation and practice. Each individual needs to experiment with various ways in which new patterns of thought and new ways of observation and behavior can become a part of himself.

To the same extent, new behavior needs to be practiced before it is taken back to the work situation. Many a training program has turned out to be ineffective, not because the individual did not "learn," but because he did not make it a part of himself to a point where he had sufficient competence and confidence to put it to use in the work situation.

Learning How to Learn. Because of the importance of the goal of a continuous cycle of learning, the basic and necessary objectives of area training have been described in terms of developing new attitudes or a new perspective toward events that are likely to occur overseas. Not only can existing attitudes interfere with the ability to learn, but it would be difficult to provide in training a substantial part of what he will need to know in his particular work and locality (even assuming he would use the information). Participants of any area training program are likely to be going to diverse assignments and adequate, up-to-date information frequently is unavailable even if the logistics of getting the appropriate information to the individual were available.

A feasible solution is one of increasing the capability of the trainee to learn from life experiences and more formal learning efforts. If the person going overseas can be helped to become more diagnostically competent about human and "change" situations, to be more aware of his own behavior and its consequences, and to learn how to become both a participant and an observer in his work situation, he will be better able to continue his process of learning long after the training period is completed.

Techniques of Human Relations Training

Human relations training refers to a variety of techniques as well as to an overall approach. Three of these techniques, T-group, role-playing, and case study, will be presented and evaluated in this report.

The T-group (training group) is the cornerstone of most human relations programs. In a supportive and initially unstructured atmosphere, participants learn to analyze and understand their own and each other's behavior. The trainer functions mainly as a resource person to facilitate the process.

In contrast to this unstructured situation, role-playing typically requires participants to "act out" designated roles which are believed to offer useful learning experiences. Case study also involves learning from an analysis of roles, but the role is defined on paper by means of a problem situation presented from the point of view of one of the individuals involved.

While T-group and role-playing provide an emotional experience by means of face-to-face contact, case study tends to be relatively more concerned with thinking per se and is geared to the cultivation of the more purely cognitive skills involved in analyzing problems and issues in communication.

TRAINING GROUPS (T-GROUPS)

Description of the T-Group Method

The T-group, as characterized by Leland P. Bradford and Dorothy Mial (16), is the central training unit of most human relations training programs. It is

an initially unstructured group of, probably, eight to 15 participants who are together without a predetermined agenda, or established norms. The composition of the group varies; typically participants are strangers to one another and have diverse occupational and organizational backgrounds, but more recent work has emphasized within-organization training. They are usually in training because of their—or their superior's—interest in improving leadership or management ability.

The trainer functions as a resource person to help the group members analyze and understand their own behavior, rather than in the traditional role of the instructor or discussion leader. The ambiguity or vacuum created by the absence of these traditional guides creates anxiety and tension in most people. Participants attempt to alleviate this tension either by withdrawing from active participation or by attempting to fill the vacuum by assuming familiar roles such as taking leadership, attempting to gather support, making assumptions about goals, setting up an agenda, making rules, and so forth. By and large, this behavior will reflect the individual's normal way of behaving under stress.

How much each member can learn in the T-group is determined in large part by the extent to which he is able to become personally involved in the group and its processes. Willingness to expose one's behavior requires a high level of trust. Creating a supportive climate in which exposure is safe thus becomes an important task in a T-group. With the help of the trainer—who may interpret the psychological processes going on in the group or induce certain behavior by his own example—these groups typically develop a climate where it is safe to expose characteristic ways of behaving, to react freely, to express feelings in a way that can be helpful, to ask for reactions to one's own behavior, and to try other ways of behaving.

Through experiment in this ambiguous situation, participants have an opportunity to learn to establish processes of inquiry, to give and receive help (feedback), and to create conditions in which they can learn and work collaboratively.

From an initial lack of structure, the T-group moves toward a workable structure which it has created. In the process, each member may learn about his own motives, feelings, and strategies for dealing with other people and about the consequences of his actions.

A T-group is a deeply involving experience. The emphasis is upon the ongoing (here and now) processes and events which are occurring in the group situation rather than upon past experiences of members. The goals of the T-group can be variously stated, but include:

(1) Self-insight
(2) Sensitivity to conditions which inhibit or facilitate interpersonal functioning
(3) Skills in diagnosing individual and group behavior
(4) Increase in role flexibility
(5) Understanding of the dynamics of the communication process
(6) Increase in skills in solving problems which involve the human element
(7) Stronger motivation to try to improve one's own performance

Frequently, unstated goals that could be encompassed in most, if not all, of the above include (a) a modification or restructuring of the assumptions that ordinarily are taken for granted, (b) a spirit of inquiry or tentativeness in reaching conclusions, and (c) an openness in expressing feelings. These latter elements appear to be of particular significance for area training.

Effectiveness of T-Group Training

A large number of research investigations have been conducted to evaluate the nature and effectiveness of T-groups and laboratory training. Since these have been recently summarized by Stock (17) and Buchanan (18), a survey of individual studies is not necessary. Stock's analysis emphasizes effects in terms of intermediate goals such as self-insight and changed perception, and Buchanan looks at several more recent studies using subsequent job performances as a criterion. The studies, however, are mainly attempts to evaluate a human relations training program as a whole, usually consisting of a variety of methods, such as role-playing, lectures, practice sessions, and discussion groups as well as T-groups.

While T-groups are usually considered the cornerstone of the program, conclusions reached by total program evaluations cannot be attributed solely to the T-group technique. To the authors' knowledge, there have been no conclusive studies that have compared the relative effectiveness of human relations-like training without T-groups to human relations training with T-groups.

The problem of experimentally evaluating complex multi-goal training techniques or programs against complex difficult-to-measure criteria specifications is great, and conclusions drawn from research findings are necessarily tentative and lacking in clarity. In addition, most participants are self-selected; they have tended to be middle class, above average in intelligence and education, and professional, managerial, or supervisory personnel. Consequently, the conclusions presented here refer only to this population.

Despite difficulties and limitations, the trend of research information suggests that the following generalizations about the learning effects of human relations training centered on T-groups are probably valid.

(1) Human relations training has been successful in bringing about performance changes that are regarded (by superiors, peers, subordinates, T-group observers) as increasing the trainees' actual or probable work and/or interpersonal effectiveness.

In her review of experimental evidence, Stock (17) indicates that the following have been shown, in at least one or more studies, to be influenced by human relations training: various perceptions of the self, affective behavior, congruity between self-percept and ideal self, self-insight, sensitivity to the feelings or behavior of others, role flexibility, sensitivity to group decisions, diagnostic ability, behavioral skill, ability to use various training techniques, self-confidence, and ability to diagnose organization problems.

In addition, favorable (in the judges' opinion) changes in work performance in the eyes of superiors, peers, and subordinates have been noted (18). Typical ratings or comments were: increase in listening, easier to communicate views to, better contribution to group situations, increase in tolerance and flexibility, more self-confidence, greater personal responsibility for work performance, greater sensitivity to others, more receptive to new information.

(2) Effectiveness of T-group and human relations training (especially in terms of behavioral implementation) is dependent on the trainee's attitude or expectation (before training) of how and whether the training will assist him.

(3) Feedback (the communication to the trainee of others' perceptions of the trainee's behavior) appears to be a vital aspect of training.

(4) Individuals differ in their reactions to T-groups and human relations training and in the degree and kinds of learning they acquire. Although training increases the effectiveness of most individuals, there is evidence that some do not benefit, and even that sometimes effectiveness is lessened. There is some

evidence that suggests that this is a function of personality characteristics of the trainee. Those benefiting from training do not necessarily change in the same ways.

(5) Although T-groups have a basic similarity, each group is different, and consequently T-group effects vary more widely than do those of traditional methods. "Lessons" learned are dependent on group atmosphere, trainer characteristics and skills, explicit and implicit goals, and other interacting variables, which vary from group to group.

(6) Changes in job performance are more likely to occur when the trainee's organization permits and supports the behavior which stems from the newly acquired attitudes and understanding. For this reason, more recent attention has been given to the use of human relations training, and T-groups in particular, in the strategy of development of whole organizations, rather than to changes in individuals per se.

(7) Anecdotal evidence (reports by trainees and impressions acquired by observers of the training) is overwhelmingly favorable but typically vague in specifying the learning that has occurred.

(8) Several follow-up studies (up to about one year after training) indicate that the desirable changes in behavior arising from human relations training can be lasting.

Stock (17) has likened research on T-groups to an incomplete and unevenly filled checkerboard. There are some answers, but questions partially-answered predominate; many questions are not clear, and new issues are unfolding as research progresses. The question, "Do T-groups bring about desired changes in behavior?" is too general to lead to fruitful answers. T-groups, while having some general characteristics in common, are not based on identical techniques, goals, leadership styles, or types of participants. The questions of which variations on this common theme and what mixture of them is most effective with which trainees remain largely unanswered.

It can be said that desirable changes in work effectiveness have been observed for some people as a function of their training under certain conditions. Most trainers are likely to give the primary credit for the changes to the T-group experience. On the several occasions when human relations training has been compared to more traditional methods, changes held to be improvements in behavior were more frequently reported for the human relations training.

Past Applications of T-Groups in Area Training

Those individuals familiar with T-group training and the nature of the problems encountered by Americans overseas immediately perceive a close relationship between the goals of the former and the training needs of the latter. Yet, little use has been made of T-group training or the basic principles of human relations training to prepare people for overseas assignments.

Experience with T-groups in training members of one culture to work in another is quite limited. One of the earlier efforts has been related by Lynton (19) in his account of Aloka, an international training center in India. Participants were young community development leaders from the developing nations of Asia and Africa. They were brought together in an almost completely unstructured situation of communal living in which the participants determined the nature and course of training. Primary attention was given to understanding one's own needs and feelings, the objective being conceptualized in terms of the demands of effective community development work (the participants were going to return to their own countries after the training). The implication of

this T-group-like experience for area training is not much clearer than accounts of T-groups in the United States which could be interpreted in terms of sub-cultural barriers.

Curtis Mial[1] described the use of T-groups during two weeks of a four-week training exercise that was part of a Venezuelan community development program. Participants consisted of five groups with approximately an equal number of Venezuelan and American or European trainees who would be working in the field with each other. Mial reports that in some cases differences in cultural values between Venezuelans and non-Venezuelans became apparent and were "worked through" to a degree which the trainers felt would enhance their future field work effectiveness.

Hubert Coffey and Jane Zahn[2] have conducted T-group training as part of the community development section of an overseas preparation program for Agency for International Development, State Department, (AID) personnel who were going to Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos. Goals were directed more toward understanding administrative and interpersonal processes in general rather than toward dealing with the cross-cultural aspects specifically. No attempt has been made to evaluate the T-group training empirically, but a follow-up inquiry of former trainees suggests that the experience was quite valuable. Personal evaluations by trainees and staff have been mixed, some praising it highly as the most valuable part of the training and others being highly critical.

Several of the institutions that have trained Peace Corps Volunteers have used techniques which closely resemble T-group training. In addition to using typical T-groups of extended weekend length, the University of California at Los Angeles has used partially structured discussion groups with leaders who have had extensive training in the human relations approach.[3] The sessions differ from ordinary discussion groups in the emphasis on the emotional reactions of the individual group members in the "here and now" situation and in the attempts which are made to relate these reactions to similar situations overseas.

The primary objective of the workshops appears to be one of assisting the trainee in his personal adjustment to his anticipated overseas role—increasing self-confidence, alleviating anxiety during training, preparing for culture shock, understanding oneself, and so forth—rather than developing cross-cultural sensitivity per se. Nevertheless, the learning that occurs undoubtedly has a large cross-cultural component. Not only are cross-cultural and personal adjustment inseparable in actual practice, but many topics of the workshop arise from reaction to foreign nationals on the staff (usually language instructors), or lectures concerning cross-cultural aspects of their assignments. Formal evaluation of these aspects of the program has been undertaken, but results have been inconclusive. On the basis of informal evaluations by the training staff and Peace Corps Volunteers, lecture time has been reduced to increase the time available for the group sessions.

T-group training has also been used at a Peace Corps training program in Puerto Rico. Under the guidance of Henry B. Voges,[4] trainees have engaged in

[1]Personal communication. Dr. Mial is with the National Training Laboratories, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

[2]Department of Psychology and School of Education, respectively, University of California, Berkeley.

[3]Personal communication with Elwin V. Svenson, Associate Director, University Extension. Cannon (20) has written a brief informal description and trainee evaluation of the initial weekend use of T-groups in UCLA Peace Corps training.

[4]Personal communication. Mr. Voges is now with the Agency for International Development (Community Development).

week-long half-day instrumented labs along guidelines developed by Robert Blake (21). The focus is on understanding group interaction processes on the reasonable assumption that if one is not comfortable with or aware of the process level in his own culture, he stands little chance of understanding it in another culture.

The University of Hawaii has utilized more conventional T-group training as part of its Peace Corps program.[1] Sessions are intermixed with other parts of the program. Emphasis is placed largely on self-understanding and sensitivity to the feelings and viewpoints of other trainees. The training staff believes that the T-group-derived habits of looking at motivational factors increase the benefits derived from the subsequent simulated field experience, an important core of their training program. The field exercise loosely simulates physical, sociological, and psychological aspects of working overseas and has itself some of the characteristics of the T-group social structure, since agenda, working relationship, and so forth, need to be worked out largely by the trainees themselves if they are to adjust to the isolation and primitive living conditions of the field exercise.

The Experiment for International Living has developed, over the past 30 years, a group discussion technique to increase the students' ability to adjust to living and working conditions in the host country and to increase their sensitivity to the feelings and values of others. Although this aspect of their program has been developed independently of the explorations by the National Training Laboratories, there is apparently a great deal of overlap in the style and objectives of the two efforts.

The Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh,[2] has planned numerous innovations in the training of business and government officials who will be working overseas. Their first effort was a four-week program for middle-level Westinghouse Corporation executives. The goals of the program have been stated in terms of changes in the value orientation basic to cross-cultural and interpersonal effectiveness—very similar to the needs outlined in the introductory section—rather than in terms of area knowledge or familiarity with foreign legal and business practices. The T-group is likely to be a basic technique. Case studies, problem-solving exercises, role-playing, demonstrations, and "cultural immersion" are also used.

Speculations on the Use of T-Groups for Area Training

Certainly if human relations training results in increased effectiveness in the interpersonal aspects of work performance in the United States, it would appear to be of value for most work overseas where the human element is likely to be even more critical to the accomplishment of one's mission. T-group training would seem especially applicable since the principal objective is to increase broad individual capabilities such as sensitivity and flexibility, rather than specific job or role-related behavior.

Awareness of Interpersonal Processes. One of the potential values of T-group training as preparation for overseas assignment rests, in part, on the same rationale as training for U.S.-based development programs: increased awareness of the presence and nature of interpersonal processes. In a familiar institutionalized role, individuals can often ignore, without great penalty, much of what goes on in the relationships between people; in the ambiguity of an unfamiliar culture this is probably not possible. Awareness and sensitivity to

[1]The University of Hawaii program has been one of the most experimental of the Peace Corps training efforts. For a description of the rationale of the program, see T.W. Maretzki (22).

[2]Personal communication. A. Gaylord Obern, Director of Special Training.

the irrational and "feeling" level of interaction and to the complexities of human relationships take on new importance in an overseas environment. A new "vocabulary" of cues may be required in the specific culture, but the need for the "habit of looking" remains. Increased awareness of the complexities of human behavior and increased skill in observing it should also have the advantage of motivating the overseas personnel to seek greater knowledge and understanding of the host people.

Openness to New Experiences. A willingness to experiment, to try new ways and to welcome new experiences, is an essential ingredient of overseas work, in terms of both work effectiveness and psychological adjustment. The development of such openness and willingness to experiment is a primary objective of T-group training.

Insight Into American Values. The added dimension of cultural differences, the element that underlies the special nature of overseas work, seems equally in keeping with T-group training objectives. Understanding one's own American motives and values and the assumptions underlying them has been repeatedly stressed (6, 23, 7) as a critical training need for overseas personnel, and is perceived by Mills (24) as the basic advantage of T-groups in training Americans for overseas work. In fact, gaining insight into motives and assumptions shared by participants should be easier than for those that are personal and unshared. There is less need to be defensive when motives and assumptions are commonly shared and represent "habits of our minds" rather than personal mechanisms.

Appreciation of Differences in Perspective. The T-group usually accentuates an awareness that problems and situations often may be approached in a variety of ways. Such differences in approach are, in many instances, attributable to sub-cultural background. Whatever the source of the differences, awareness that other people may prefer other approaches may increase a trainee's ability to perceive a problem or situation from another person's perspective.

Reduction of Culture Shock. Experience in learning to cope with unstructured situations may lessen the impact of culture shock, since the T-group is, in many ways, a simulation of entry into a new and unfamiliar culture.

Innovations in the Use of T-Groups

Certain innovations probably could be incorporated in the T-group to make it more efficient in meeting the needs of preparing people for overseas assignment. A few suggestions are presented here:

(1) Correlate T-group training with content of other training. Training outside the T-group (lectures, theory, sessions, role-playing, and so forth) would have a cross-cultural content. Consequently, the T-group process is likely to reflect these nuances and much of the content of T-group training is likely to stem from other training.

(2) Adjust content of interpretation to cross-cultural objectives. With cross-cultural training objectives in mind, the emphasis of the interventions by the trainer could change somewhat. For example, he might attempt to relate the ongoing behavior to anticipated events in the overseas situation; point to the conflict and communication problems between individuals that are due to differences in background and sub-cultural values as examples of cross-cultural phenomena; or analyze the reactions to the ambiguity of the T-group as indications that could be used to recognize culture shock overseas.

(3) Include non-Westerners in the composition of the T-group. Some of the group members could be non-Western nationals, either individuals who

are from the American trainee's future destination or from one or more non-Western countries. In the process of evolving group norms and behavior, contrasts in behavior, attitudes, and feelings should be observed and examined in order to make these processes explicit and understandable. In addition, feelings of warmth and intimacy (even toward one's antagonists) usually develop in a T-group. This factor could predispose the American to feel that foreigners, even though differing in many beliefs and values, share some emotional concerns with Americans. Such a predisposition could affect critical early personal contacts in such a way as to shape the course of subsequent events in a beneficial manner.

ROLE-PLAYING

Description of Role-Playing

In the technique usually called role-playing, participants are typically instructed to "act out" a role which is structured in a way that promises to offer a learning experience to the participants, and perhaps to the audience. The prescribed detail of the role varies but role-playing differs from dramatic acting primarily in that a verbatim script is not provided and the "actor" is usually playing himself in a generalized role, such as that of a supervisor or a mayor. Usually there is a trainer who prepares the role-players and who may intervene either to interpret the action or to provide general direction. The role-playing session may involve any number of people, but groups are typically small. Individual "scenes" may last a few minutes or several hours and are usually followed by a discussion and analysis of the events and feelings of the participants.

Role-playing has advantages over traditional methods, such as lectures, in that the trainees are more intensely involved in the learning experience. Furthermore, learning takes place simultaneously at the feeling, acting, and thinking levels, thereby avoiding the artificial separation of action from words and thinking. The conditions necessary for the successful use of role-playing are similar to those which were discussed in the introductory remarks about human relations training: willingness to expose one's self, feedback, a supportive atmosphere, opportunity for practice, and integration with existing and more basic attitudes and beliefs. The rationale of why role-playing works can also be explained in the "frozen-unfreezing-refreezing" cycle of the learning process.

Role-playing should not be thought of as a single technique. It is used in a variety of ways depending upon the objectives of the training and the philosophy and experience of the trainer. However, the use of role-playing tends to take the following general forms:

(1) Skills Training. The emphasis here is on practicing techniques that may make the trainee more effective in a fairly well-defined situation. Sales training programs frequently use this approach in order to improve sales strategy, vocal intonations, or facial expressions. Observers may feed back criticism on the trainee's well-entrenched or more newly-developed "trial" behavior with the objective being stated in terms of "how to do it" rather than in terms of changing attitudes or perceptions.

(2) Instructional Aid. Role-playing can also be used as a live demonstration much in the same manner that a movie, graph, or physical model can be used as an audio-visual aid. The technique may be chosen to convey the

desired information because (a) the information best lends itself to communication by this medium, or (b) the medium itself creates greater trainee interest and consequently longer expected retention of learning.

(3) Understanding Others. In addition to using role-playing for skills practice and demonstration, it can also be used to increase the trainee's awareness of the motives, attitudes, and feelings of others. When he plays the role of another person, the trainee has the opportunity to feel and behave as he would. From this experience, he is likely to develop an increased understanding and respect for the way in which the other person sees the world. With this new perspective, the behavior of the trainee is also likely to change.

(4) Understanding Self. Almost inseparable from understanding others is the use of role-playing designed to change personal attitudes and, indirectly, the behaviors arising from them. Developing self-insight, increasing personal flexibility, and providing motivation for change would be typical objectives. The procedural form of this type of role-playing tends to be the same as that used to increase one's sensitivity to others. Spontaneity training, described later in this section, is a form of role-playing with "self-discovery" as one of its primary objectives.

That these distinctions can be useful does not mean that a role-playing session designed to increase sales skills might not also produce greater social sensitivity or self-insight. In practice these objectives are intermixed, but the emphasis on one or on the other is likely to lead to the use of different techniques and consequently result in somewhat different outcomes. For example, the techniques of reversing the roles of the participants, or using an "alter-ego" to verbalize a participant's feelings in understanding others, are most likely to be used in the last two approaches; a fairly detailed role restraint is more likely when role-playing is used as an instructional aid.

Role-playing can also be characterized as primarily either (a) analytical or (b) spontaneous. The rationale for role-playing presented earlier tends to fall into the analytical category: In analytical role-playing there is an attempt to create conditions which are conducive to feedback so that the trainee may recognize his ineffective behavior and, on the basis of the analysis, substitute and practice improved forms. Spontaneity training, in contrast, provides conditions for free expression and experimentation, and depends primarily upon emergent self-discovery instead of formal feedback as a means of learning. The trainee plays his role in response to his immediate feelings rather than by using stereotyped guides. The goals of spontaneity training are more likely to be phrased in terms of insight, flexibility, and empathic understanding rather than by a direct increase in human relations skills.

Role-playing, then, refers to a variety of ways to use a basic technique of getting the participant to act and feel, rather than think about, a role relative to a problem situation. Additional techniques may be incorporated into the role-taking framework; the focus of training can vary widely; and the learning consequences of the role-playing experience can vary according to the level or type of learning as well as to its content.

Effectiveness of Role-Playing

An evaluation of role-playing as a training method, like an evaluation of the T-group, is complicated by the great variety of goals and techniques that can be used. In addition, most research studies that have been completed have limited significance either because control groups were not used, the duration of role-playing was insufficient to bring about the types of changes ordinarily

judged to be of practical significance, or existing means of measuring effectiveness in human relations were inadequate.

The most recent literature survey of experimental studies on role-playing was published in 1956 by Mann (25). Relatively few experimental studies had then been completed and few have appeared since that time. For the purpose of analysis, existing research on role-playing can be divided into studies concerned with (a) teaching skills, (b) experimenting with the technique as an audio-visual aid, (c) changing specified attitudes and opinions, and (d) improving performance in a complex situation by changing the participants along some personality or perceptual dimension believed to be critical to performance.

Teaching Skills. To the writers' knowledge no experimental studies to evaluate skills training have been completed, although the literature suggests this form of role-playing is used widely. It is commonly accepted that practice is "good" and will lead to greater skill if a deficiency exists. Ability adequately to specify effective and ineffective behaviors and to classify situations is assumed in this approach. Teaching a trainee how to listen, be assertive, or introduce himself, for example, assumes that the taught behavior is desirable or that the trainee can discern when it is not. These issues raise the question of whether the skills training can be generalized to other appropriate situations which are largely dissimilar to the training situation. Successful training also does not insure its use in the "real" situations, although it is assumed that one of the advantages of role-playing over lecture-type methods is that it increases motivation to use this skill in other situations as well as in improving the skill itself.

As an Instructional Aid. No experimental studies appear to have been conducted to evaluate the effects of role-playing used as a demonstration exercise. Several of the studies cited here, however, indicate that active involvement in role-playing brings about greater shifts in opinions and attitudes than passive observation of the role-playing. In general, reports from trainees suggest that role-playing, perhaps because of its novelty, or the ability of the observer more readily to identify with the "actors," creates a greater interest and involvement than movies or other visual aids.

Changing Attitudes. Most experimental studies of role-playing have been concerned with changes of attitudes and opinions as a consequence of the trainee's being a role-play advocate of a position contrary to his original preferred position. Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (26, chap. 7) have summarized studies of this type (prior to 1953), concluding that an active assumption of a pretended opinion, such as when one makes an argument in what he does not believe before an audience, does have a persuasive effect in causing the person to change towards the pretended opinion. They also conclude, primarily on the basis of the study by King and Janis (27), that the shift in opinion is due to the opportunity for improvisation (rather than greater satisfaction, attention, repetition, heightened learning, or reformulation into one's own words) present in role-playing that requires the subjects to elaborate and add to the arguments supplied by the experimenter.

The advantage of role-playing over more passive exposure to information designed to bring about opinion change is further supported by subsequent studies by Rosenberg (28), Culbertson (29), and Scott (30, 31).

Rosenberg, using role-playing situations involving labor-management relations, guidance problems, and so forth, demonstrated that the changes in responses to a questionnaire were greatest among participating role-players, exceeding identifiers (observers told to identify with a participant) and, even

more, objective observers. Observations, together with the questionnaire results, however, led her to conclude that the effectiveness of the three positions depends on the goals of training. Participants, for example, were highly involved and aware of feelings but biased in their picture of what had happened, while identifiers tended to be less involved but more accurate in their interpretations.

Culbertson likewise found that shifts in attitude toward integrated housing and toward Negroes in general varied with the degree of active involvement in advocating a theme for an educational program that was to favor residential integration; role-players became more positive in their attitudes than observers, and observers changed more than controls.

Scott also found that subjects who argued one of several positions contrary to one they believed, changed in the direction of role-play argument but did so only if they were told they had won the debate.

Stanley and Klausmeier (32) failed to find significant changes in world-mindedness attitudes following role-playing. They attributed their negative results to the large classroom setting and formal nature of the experimental conditions.

The evidence suggests, then, that having to advocate a position actively tends to bring about a corresponding change in opinion and attitude. However, the exact nature of the variables which contribute to this observed change are less clearly defined.

Changing Personality, Perception, and Performance. While most experimental studies have been concerned with the effects of a limited type of role-playing—(one-way communication to an audience)—on the participant's attitude toward a specific element, the practical use of this technique has been directed primarily toward increasing interpersonal effectiveness. In no studies known to the authors have attempts been made to demonstrate the effects of role-play training on changes in actual real life behavior unless one wishes to include several studies (33, 34, 35, 36) which demonstrate that role-playing training can increase effectiveness in subsequent role-playing situations. So used, the situations would be regarded as intermediate criteria of success.

However, several studies have been made concerning the change in personality or perceptual variables that are believed to be important in interpersonal interaction. For example, Jansen and Stolurow (37) conclude "that role-playing is a feasible and potentially effective means of training psychiatric aides." In a study which was designed primarily to investigate the relative effectiveness of different methods of role-playing, these authors found that role-playing (all methods combined) changed perception of job-related decisions of an ideal psychiatric aide, as measured by a questionnaire, more than no-role-play training. Predicted changes in the meaning of job-connected concepts and the meaning of interpersonal job problems did not occur. This and other results confuse the significance of their findings.

Mann (25) also summarizes other studies that indicate some favorable effects of role-playing, but the absence of control groups and the additional presence of a negative finding limit their implications. Mann and Mann (38) unexpectedly found that members of task-oriented groups changed more than members of role-playing groups on certain favorable characteristics of interpersonal adjustment.

Gibb (33) found that role-playing, when added to other training methods of the laboratory type, significantly increased the degree of self-insight (awareness of the perception that others have of the self).

Lawshe and Bolda (39) report a series of four studies with industrial and business personnel that comes closest of all the reported studies in bringing about the type of changes which appear to be relevant to area training. They used responses to questions about a case study human relations film as a measure of change before and after role-play training. They found that the role-playing trainees changed more than those in a discussion group with respect to sensitivity, social cues, other people's feelings, and the "whys" of their behavior. "Employee orientation," which they believe to be a more deeply-rooted attitude, did not change significantly. Trainees undergoing five training sessions changed more than those having one session.

Maier, Hoffman, and Lansky (34) found greater improvement in performance on a simulated human relations situation (role-playing of a difficult interview) by those who had weekly role-playing cases than by those who did not. However, they note that these differences are small, and that, like the typical human relations training course, the time is insufficient to change behavior significantly.

Summary. No experimental evidence clearly and directly demonstrates the value of role-playing in improving human relations effectiveness at the behavioral level. The balance of evidence suggests that attitudes which may be relevant to how one performs can be changed, at least for a certain period, by some form of role-playing. Nevertheless, the techniques have received at least moderately wide acceptance in executive, supervisory, and human relations training.

Although individuals react differently, trainee reaction, by and large, has been favorable. Corsini, Shaw, and Blake (40, p. 45) report, for example, two studies which indicate that about 80% of the business-employed participants endorsed role-playing as a training method. The difficulty of interpreting such self-report polls, however, is apparent as demonstrated by evidence (37, 39) that those who have the most discomfort and the least favorable attitudes toward their role-playing experience are the most likely to show indications of changed attitudes and perception.

An evaluation of role-playing training relative to its cost and learning effects, with or without experimental research, is a difficult task primarily because the question itself does not lead to productive inquiry. There is sufficient evidence, experimental or anecdotal, that learning acquired through role-playing depends upon many other variables such as:

(1) The training objective, the type and level of learning, and the content to be taught.
(2) The particular plots used; some plots are more effective than others.
(3) The role assigned; some roles have greater learning potential than others.
(4) The skill of the leader, particularly in setting the climate for training and in discussing and analyzing the role-playing experience.
(5) The length of time new learning needs to be maintained.
(6) Characteristics of the trainee; although evidence is not clear, there are suggestions that some individuals derive greater learning from this type of learning experience while others gain more with other techniques.
(7) The interaction effects of the characteristics of the trainee (6) with the above, especially the plots used (2) and the assigned roles (3).

(8) The degree to which desired behavior can be clearly specified; it appears that as well as unfreezing behavior, role-playing also "provides" alternative solutions together with an opportunity to practice and test them in a realistic but safe, not-for-real situation.

Past Applications of Role-Playing in Area Training

Role-playing has been used in area training programs for a number of years, but its use has usually been in the form of demonstration exercises incidental to the total program. The authors know of no program, except the simulated-experience-in-the-field approach to be discussed subsequently, which uses role-playing as a primary training vehicle for the program as a whole or for a significant part of it.

For a number of years the U.S. Information Agency has used role-playing in its "Meet-the-Critic" sessions as part of its orientation program. Typically, a trainee plays the role of an American who is being questioned or is questioning a foreign national about political differences between their respective governments. The emphasis is on policy differences and how to handle them rather than on cultural differences per se, and the exercise is used more as a visual aid and, to a minor extent, a means of skill development, than as a way of developing insight or understanding into the cultural aspects of the phenomena or the dynamics of the interpersonal process.

A similar exercise, "A Communist's View of the World," consists of the trainer, playing the role of a reasonable and likable Soviet representative, adroitly fielding questions from the audience. The primary objectives are to challenge existing stereotypes, create an awareness of alternate perspectives to world events, and alert Americans to the skill of many Soviet officials.

These two exercises have also been used in some Peace Corps programs. The evaluations have been mixed, some users believing that the method does not stress the important aspects of the problem and that it may alienate the audience in a manner which negates its teaching potential.

More typical, but probably still relatively unusual, is the approach used in a Peace Corps training program for Iran at Georgetown University.[1] Through reading and discussing the problem with Iranian nationals, primarily the native language trainers, a role-playing expert devised a series of situations which appeared to be critical aspects of working effectively in the particular country and work setting. The instructor assumed the Iranian role and personality while the Peace Corps trainees assumed appropriate roles of the Volunteer in Iran. Discussion and feedback formed part of the role-playing exercises. There appears to be a consensus that while the exercise was worthwhile, its potentials were minimized by a lack of sufficient knowledge about Iranian culture and the Volunteer's future work setting. The emphasis of the program tended to be on the development of insight and understanding about the particular culture and work setting plus some development of skill in handling these critical situations.

The American Institute for Research (41, 42) developed for the Peace Corps a series of role-playing exercises which consist of points for discussion and "formulas" for evaluating effective and ineffective behavior as well as plot situations and role instructions. These exercises do not seem to have been used very widely.

[1]Personal communication. Howard Geer and James M. Enneis, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, D.C.

In other Peace Corps training efforts, trainees have been immersed in a cross-cultural setting. While this form of training is probably more appropriately called simulation or field training, it bears some similarity to role-playing in the sense that the field exercise is a temporary situation in which trainees are assuming roles for their learning values.[1] They are briefly described here since the objectives of field training can include changes in the perspective and attitudes of the individual as well as simply practice in working in a particular culture or job.

At the University of New Mexico Training Center, placement of trainees in small Spanish-speaking communities of northern New Mexico doubles as practical training in community development and as a cross-cultural training experience (43, pp. 72-5). Volunteers with subsequent overseas experience reported favorably on the value of this exposure to a new culture, particularly with respect to its value in learning to work on a "different wavelength" with people of a different orientation. The Columbia University School of Social Work conducts field training in urban community development for Peace Corps Volunteers (44). The cross-cultural exposure is both socioeconomic and ethnic since an attempt is made to have Volunteers assigned to Spanish-speaking areas.

The Peace Corps Training Center in Puerto Rico typically requires trainees to go to a rural community without prior arrangements or introductions. The purpose is to gain knowledge about the community along community development and cultural dimensions. Often the shortcoming of this kind of approach is the lack of cognitive interpretation or feedback-in-depth necessary for it to become a true training experience. However, Volunteers usually report field training to be very valuable.

Another effort, labeled Transition Training, is being explored by the University of Hawaii at its Waipio Valley Peace Corps training site (45, 22). An attempt has been made to simulate physically, sociologically, and psychologically the peasant society environment that the Volunteers are likely to encounter in their Southeast Asian assignments. Periodically, staff members play the role of foreign officials with whom the trainees, as Volunteers overseas, must deal.

While training in technical skills, language, and physical conditioning frequently form a part of this program, the primary emphasis is given to factors which directly or indirectly reflect the psychological problems of moving from one culture to another. The primary value of the Waipio Valley training, as with field training, appears to be one of building trainee confidence in the ability to deal with unfamiliar situations similar to the ones they will encounter and of developing greater awareness and insight into the meaning of the barrier to cross-cultural understanding.

Speculations on the Use of Role-Playing in Area Training

A basic question to be answered before planning any area training program is the extent to which the training should be geared to a specific culture rather than to cross-cultural assignments in general. While this question is fundamental for all three of the training methods described in this report, it is especially important in role-playing since it affords a greater opportunity to learn and practice ways of handling cross-cultural conflict in a specific culture,

[1]The field exercises, however, are typically *much* longer, have fewer role restraints, and tend to be closer to *role-taking* in the sociological, rather than psychological sense.

as well as providing an unfreezing face-to-face experience aimed toward making the trainee more fully aware of, and sensitive to, potential problem areas. There is no reason that the role-playing experience cannot simultaneously serve both functions—development of appropriate attitudes and ways of conceptualizing the overseas situation and providing knowledge and skills for working within a specific culture—if (a) the trainee's destination is known and (b) enough specific and accurate information is available about "correct responses" in the particular culture.

The biggest danger of using role-playing aimed toward a specific culture lies in the tendency to de-emphasize fundamental cognitive and attitudinal changes in favor of concrete and quickly acquired "how to do it" answers that are less threatening to the trainee. A second danger, related to the point on accuracy of knowledge about the overseas situation, is that the trainee may overgeneralize from the content of his role-playing experience. It is possible that the trainee could come away from his role-play training with the expectation that all nationals of "country X" will think, feel, and act in the demonstrated way. Whenever the learned solution is not appropriate to the situation or sub-culture involved, the problem becomes compounded, first by the false security of having the "right" answer, and later by the need to unlearn what was learned in training.

Training which is response or behavior oriented can be consistently effective only to the extent the person working in a foreign culture is sensitive and alert to situations and individuals with whom he is interacting. Consequently, the objective of the role-playing approach proposed here is a matter of learning how to learn through creating the attitudes, perceptions, motivations, and conceptual tools that are conducive to curious, open-minded, well-directed learning in the overseas situation. At the same time, knowing what to do and being able to do it are also important. To the extent alternative solutions are known to the trainee, he is more likely to question and alter his habitual response; but it is important that he not view a solution as a fixed and infallible answer.

It may even be possible to classify some problem situations independent of cultural differences and to develop role-play exercises around classes of responses which are likely to be most often universally appropriate. For example, it seems fairly reasonable that listening rather than talking, and asking questions rather than making statements in certain types of situations, is an effective way of working with others in any culture when one is not familiar with the culture or sub-culture. Such a classification of interpersonal problem situations, together with possible solutions that tend to be effective irrespective of cultural factors, would appear to be an area worthy of further investigation.

The nature of the cross-cultural problem somewhat limits the variety of role-playing techniques that can be used. This is especially true of the use of "role reversal" which has been shown to be effective in developing an empathic understanding of the values and assumptions of another. It is difficult, for example, to play a role that one has not experienced or observed. Consequently, it is unlikely that having American trainees assume foreign roles will be effective in creating a role-play situation from which the cross-cultural aspect of the communication and interaction process will emerge. The most obvious solution is to use foreign nationals to take the non-American roles. The degree to which the role is structured could vary, but the trainer would depend essentially on the foreign national to fill the non-American behavior of the role-play interaction and to provide insight into the non-American perspective.

Another solution would be to train an individual—either an American or, probably more effectively, a foreign national—to behave in a loosely prescribed way which typifies the reactions, values, and style of behavior of people from a particular country or cultural-geographic area. The use of a cohort, rather than a more spontaneous (naive) person, in the non-American role insures a greater concentration of cultural contrasts since he functions with an awareness of training objectives and has some control over the evolution of events simulated by the plot situation. The actor, however, must be trained, which means that his trainer must be very well-grounded in the behavior and value components of the culture being simulated.

Probably the most effective solution is a compromise between the spontaneous and instructed actor approaches by using foreign nationals guided by both their natural tendencies and directions from the training expert. To insure that cultural factors rather than personality factors determine role behavior, it is probably important to use more than one foreign national from the culture or cultures being studied. If the objective of training is not one of also teaching about a particular culture, the actor could be trained in opposite-to-American values and behavior.[1] In this way, the value contrast between actor and trainee could be maximized and attention diverted from the content of culture to understanding the processes of cross-cultural interaction.

Aside from the selection or training of the actor, considerable attention should also be given to the plot situations since some are more likely to elicit productive learning material than others. Typically, there is a tendency for certain behavior events to be selected as the conceptual basis for the role-playing instructions, for example, crucial cultural incidents such as initial meeting or contradicting counterpart's order, or frequently occurring problem areas such as preventive medicine or nepotism.

Haines (46) has outlined directions for research on the training of Air Force personnel for the cross-cultural aspects of counterinsurgency. His proposals suggest the use of role-playing in a manner very similar to the ideas presented here, but the rationale of training is in noticeable contrast. While Haines occasionally refers to ideas such as self-confrontation, values, motivating effects, and insights, the emphasis of his proposal is on how fairly limited units of one's behavior can be changed or how particular skills (for a particular culture) can be increased. The paradigm used is the improvement of diving form through video feedback of the trainee's diving into water. It is held that immediate "self-confrontation" permits better recall and facilitates needed correction to one's diving style. Such a rationale is more specifically oriented to discrete units of terminal behavior and is less "process-oriented" than the human relations approach discussed in this report.

Of particular interest is Haines' suggested use of video tape as a means of providing feedback to the trainee, a technique which is likely to have a strong emotional impact on him (cf. 47) and hence to facilitate the unfreezing process involved in change. The technique is becoming more widely used as the necessary equipment becomes less expensive.

Some of the ideas of Robert Blake for examining inter-group phenomena (48, 49, 50) seem adaptable to a cross-cultural context. The internation simulation (cf. Guetzkow et al., 51), although originally designed for research

[1]In another aspect of Work Unit AREA, attempts are being made to set up situations to maximize the likelihood that typical American and non-American values and assumptions will emerge from the role-play instructions and the subsequent interaction. The behavior is viewed as arising from the values and assumptions as they are experienced by the role-players.

purposes, is an example of an intergroup exercise which offers a likely model for cross-cultural training. There appears to be no reason why the cultural component could not be built into these exercises, although for most Americans going overseas, groups other than the national units used by Guetzkow and his colleagues might seem more appropriate.

The role-playing exercises primarily examine behavior of the players as members or representatives of a group in interaction with members of another. The dynamics of the forces operating on the individual as a member of his own group and the interaction of behaviors between groups are both examined. It is useful that the trainee gain insight into processes at each of these levels, since he will face the (frequently incongruent) demands for both (a) intergroup behavior which successfully spans cultural differences, and (b) effective intragroup behavior, growing out of the needs of the American institutional and cultural framework within which he works.

When role-playing is used in area training, the following factors are worthy of consideration:

(1) If the trainee interprets the situation as telling him about a culture or giving him rules on what to do when he is overseas, he may overgeneralize from his particular experience without gaining insight or understanding into the processes involved.

(2) Role-playing takes a great deal of training time. Nevertheless, if the perceptual and attitudinal components are emphasized, it seems probable that role-playing may be as efficient as other methods of human relations training.

(3) While the use of role-playing looks simple, effectiveness of the techniques is very sensitive to well-developed plot situations and instructor skills that often are not available.

(4) Certain types of cross-cultural problems are difficult to role-play. Face-to-face interpersonal interactions within a limited time span are relatively easy for the trainer to conceptualize and handle. Some aspects of overseas adjustment, however, tend to accumulate over a period of time. A single event may be realistically perceived as something which could happen in the United States—but the continuous recurrence does not; for example, it would be repeated delays, not one delay in itself, which an American might find frustrating and difficult to accept in a non-Western culture.

(5) Cross-cultural factors that are reflected at the sociological or institutional level are difficult to integrate into a role-play situation. The apparent success of internation simulation exercises as a training tool (51, chaps. 2 and 6) offers hope for including these variables. However, it is interesting to note that cultural variables have been de-emphasized and more manageable roles reflecting dimensions such as power and organizational restraints have been used. Nevertheless, as previously suggested, the model presented by the investigators in this field, especially the gaming aspects, is a provocative one.

CASE METHOD

Description of the Case Method

While the case method has been used for years in training for law and medicine, the technique today is most closely associated with the Harvard Business School and other management training institutions that have followed Harvard's lead. The case typically consists of a problem situation consistently

presented from the perspective of one of the individuals involved. The information may be considered to be all that is available, requiring a participant to infer other facts, or the information may be incomplete, requiring participant inquiries to gain additional relevant information. It may be long or short, contain conflicting information or be internally consistent; it may be a semi-technical problem focused on some management specialty or essentially a problem in the human aspects of management. The case is discussed in a group situation with the members making observations, raising questions, and offering solutions.

Because the case is generally written so that members approach the problem from the perspective of a person in the case, the method may be viewed as a nonbehavioral or passive form of role-playing.

The case method was devised to prepare the individual for the practical problems of his post-academic career. The goal of the lecture approach is essentially knowledge through facts and generalized principles; the case method is used to bridge the gap between theoretical guidelines and real life through an exposure to the wisdom and understanding that can be accumulated through experience. The use of the technique is, in a sense, an attempt to simulate learning experiences that one ordinarily encounters in real life.

The goal of the case method, then, is to develop an effective style of problem solving, together with the emotional maturity, objectivity, flexibility, and other personal attitudes that are required. Rather than making the trainee familiar with accepted thought through the expertise of his instructor, he is asked to think out original answers for himself. The objective is not the acquisition of knowledge but the development of the ability to analyze realistic problems and to master the tangle of facts and circumstances that suggest conflicting solutions. Through his involvement the trainee comes to learn that solutions are not as obvious as at first they might appear, that more information is needed than he may initially tend to believe, and that everyone does not perceive the same set of events in what seemed to him to be the obvious way.

Effectively taught, the trainee becomes flexible in his willingness to revise goals and procedures, stops looking for single correct answers, and no longer fixates on a favorite generalization he might hold; he learns to ask, "What's going on here?" Additional objectives, such as increasing one's ability to communicate his thoughts to others and developing cooperative techniques of problem solving, are by-products which can receive varied emphasis.

A frequent misinterpretation of the case method is that it provides an illustration of principles that are directly applicable to other situations. Most advocates of the case method use the techniques to teach the concept that each problem is a unique one for which set "laws" of human behavior have very limited application. The case method forces the trainee to think in terms of particulars rather than abstract generalities. Thus, much of the learning is indirect and inductive. The basic purpose is to learn how to deal with certain types of problems rather than to learn a set of solutions per se.

Except that the instructor's role is more active, the "rules" are similar to those described for laboratory training: The instructor avoids being perceived as one who knows the right answers; he encourages diverse opinions and thinking for one's self; he tries to get the trainees to become aware of the assumptions that influence their thinking. Ideally, considerable attention is given to the process of how solutions were reached, in contrast to giving attention to the content of the problem. Rather than offering information or opinion, the instructor is likely to be restating an idea, summarizing, or raising questions.

The trainee's initial reaction is typically one of discomfort, because of the lack of formal structure and the absence of right answers; however, as he gains insight into the indirect learning that is taking place, discomfort and resistance typically lessen.

An adaptation of the case method, called the Incident Process, has been developed by Pigors (52) to guide the trainee toward self-examination of the decision-making process. In this variation, a critical situation is briefly presented, eliminating the long presentation which is often necessary to present the essential facts of some case studies. The trainees must decide what additional information they need. This is supplied by the trainer who will furnish only what the trainees specifically request. Individuals make private decisions at the end of the information-gathering period and subsequently discuss and critique the decisions as a group. This approach tends to build-in an awareness and analysis of the processes that affect the decision-making. The Incident Process, thus, tends to move toward the emphasis of the T-group, where attention is directed to the process of experience rather than the product or content, content serving primarily as the vehicle of the experience.

Effectiveness of the Case Method

There appears to have been little experimental evaluation of the case method.[1] However, it has been extensively used in management and human relations training for many years, and numerous impressionistic evaluations have been included in the fairly extensive literature that exists. (For examples of these evaluations, see Andrews, 54.) For many training objectives, the case method appears to be effective with most participants; for some objectives, the evidence is less clear. The extent to which learning is retained and affects subsequent performance is not readily apparent.

As with role-playing and T-groups, it is not the method itself but the manner and skill with which it is used that is significant in determining the learning outcomes of the technique. Having gained wide acceptance, and appearing to be relatively easy to conduct, case studies and practical exercises have come to be used extensively. If trainers are unfamiliar with the concept and lack skill in applying it, case studies may become perfunctory exercises that offer little opportunity for learning of either content or attitudes.

Past Applications of Case Studies in Area Training

An illustration of an incident taken from an actual field experience is, in a sense, a case study, as are the more elaborate and lengthy descriptions of events, forces, and circumstances surrounding a specific technical assistance project overseas. Reading about these experiences, especially the authors' analysis and interpretation, undoubtedly will contribute to the reader's understanding and capability of dealing with similar situations. However, not all case studies are written in a style which effectively lends itself to the case method as a teaching technique. Of the published collections[2] of case studies of cross-cultural technical assistance, relatively few are intended for case method use.

[1] A study by Anderson *et al.* (53) compares the training effects of political science courses using case studies in laboratory sections with those using simulation exercises. The results were largely inconclusive.

[2] Some of the better known case study books are Allen, (55), Teaf and Franck (56), Poston (57), Spicer (58), King (59), Paul (60), and Fayerweather (61). Of these, Spicer and Fayerweather appear to hold the greatest promise for didactic purposes.

In the design of most area training programs, especially in the Peace Corps, there is a tendency to use any field incidents which make the training more realistic and meaningful to the trainee; however, there appears to be little use of the case method as an important and well-planned aspect of training.

Speculations on the Use of the Case Method in Area Training

The use of the case method is not likely to have as dramatic an impact on the emotional-attitudinal aspects of learning as a T-group experience or role-playing. However, the case method is more likely to be effective in altering some of the trainee's habitual, but primarily intellectual, ways of decision-making and problem-solving. The sudden awareness that one is being guided by assumptions of which he was previously unaware, can often have a far-reaching impact.

The case method also has the advantage of permitting incorporation of sociological and organizational level issues into a context which can be very similar to the situations a trainee will encounter overseas. On the other hand, the case method is less effective in bringing out differences in cultural patterns which are shown primarily at the interpersonal level. The manner and style of behavior, for example, can be realistically represented only in actual, face-to-face behavior; variables concerned with the content of values, such as the prestige of elders, can be incorporated at either level.

Another advantage of the case method lies in the fact that a case can be written from the perspective of the whole range of administrative levels, from an ambassador to that of a technician in the field. A case can also be presented from the point of view of an indigenous official. In these instances, it offers an opportunity for the trainee to reverse his role (a passive type of role-playing) and view situations from perspectives different from the one he will actually occupy. Such an approach, of course, would be designed primarily to increase his sensitivity to the assumptions and point of view of others, rather than to increase his problem-solving skills directly.

Managed by a skilled instructor, a case method session can take on many of the characteristics of a T-group. Attention can be given not only to the analysis and resolution of the case, but to the interpersonal dynamics of the discussion itself, such as calling attention to the unconscious assumption and value bias of the participants, making an on-the-spot analysis of group processes, or delineating the predominant style of role taken by each participant. This group-centered, rather than problem-centered, approach suggests a technique which blends aspects of role-playing, case study, and T-group methods.

For example, case method groups could be composed of both Americans and nationals from a non-Western culture. Cases would be constructed so as to maximize the probability that the participants' solutions and problem-solving approaches would reflect their contrasting cultural values. The most effective cases will probably revolve around general management and planning problems which lack any clear identification of the cultural setting or cultural background of the participants. This ambiguity would maximize the likelihood that each trainee would interpret the case from his own set of cultural assumptions.

As the trainees' attempts to analyze the case proceed, differences between the ideas (content) and style (ways of behaving in approaching the problem) should become evident and lend themselves to examinations by the instructor and trainees. To the extent the American's job overseas is going to involve planning, negotiation, and problem classification, this training exercise should resemble the socio-psychological aspects of the cross-cultural

interaction he will experience overseas. In this sense, the training could be described as a simulation of cross-cultural interaction, or, except that the participants do not play a prescribed role, it could also be labeled as role-playing. And to the extent the here-and-now aspects of the interaction process are examined, the technique has many characteristics of T-group training.

Use of this technique will allow the trainees to experience, rather than to be told about, cross-cultural conflict, thus avoiding the typical resistance to role-playing or T-groups. Development of the detachment necessary for the trainee to analyze and understand the interaction must be achieved through the intervention of the instructor. This intervention should call attention primarily to the group of cross-cultural phenomena rather than to the issues of the case study itself.

As suggested in the discussions of role-playing and T-groups, the foreign participants could be trained cohorts of the instructor, providing greater control over ensuing events, or they could be foreign nationals who are in the United States as participant trainees or students. This would provide the foreign national with an opportunity to gain insight into both the processes of public administration and the values and thinking patterns of Americans with whom he is likely to have future contact.[1]

In another variation of the case method the interpersonal level of cross-cultural interaction could be incorporated through the use of motion picture sequences, rather than written "histories." The films could consist of short individual sequences or a more elaborate plot which could incorporate sociological and institutional level variables, as well as face-to-face interaction between individual Americans and non-Americans in an overseas situation. The objective would be to use the movie as a discussion vehicle rather than as a self-sufficient visual aid with a "points-to-be-learned" content.[2]

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The emphasis of this report has been on the potential contribution of three techniques in human relations training to a program of area training. While the planning of area training programs will benefit from a close examination of each technique, these techniques should not be viewed as the primary key to effective area training. A good training program depends largely upon a clear understanding of the rationale behind the techniques and a continuous adjustment of methods to overall objectives rather than upon the techniques in themselves. The rationale behind the techniques, the parallels between the overseas experience and the training experience, the kind of learning required and the conditions needed to support it, and, finally, the cyclic nature of the learning process—these are the dynamics, the understanding of which will enable the trainer to create and flexibly maintain a program appropriate to his training needs.

The success of area training is ultimately evaluated in terms of behavioral outcomes, but these are difficult to assess in an environment that does not

[1]For a discussion of the possible difficulties in using the case method with non-Americans, see Tagiuri (62).

[2]A precedent for using training material as a point of departure for discussion may be found in a variety of types of training programs. See, for example, the HumRRO TRAINLEAD films (63) and OFFTRAIN tapes (64), which are designed to generate group discussion and consideration of the interpersonal aspects of leadership training.

reward the kinds of behaviors developed in human relations training. For example, if the social system composed of Westerners in the host country rewards ethnocentric behavior, the behavior of a newcomer is likely to reflect the system, not his training. It is partly for this reason that many people concerned with preparing personnel for overseas work have suggested that the training program be extended after the persons have been immersed in the culture for a month or longer. Training in-country will increase the awareness and understanding necessary to question and modify the system that encourages ethnocentric behavior. This approach is comparable to training in the United States involving superiors and subordinates as intact work groups or teams from a company, school, or union. The objective is to induce change in the system, in addition to change in the individual.

Obstacles, Costs, and Potential Benefits

The design of an area training program requires practical knowledge of the obstacles likely to be encountered in human relations training, and a preliminary estimate of the costs associated with each of the three techniques. It is therefore instructive to review the obstacles and costs with respect to these techniques before discussing their advantages.

T-groups begin without agenda, rules of procedure, or division of labor. Some individuals, because of personality characteristics, are limited in their ability to benefit from T-group training. Accordingly, the process of selection should operate to bring together only those individuals who initially are receptive to this type of training. The candidates might be those in supervisory positions who have above-average education and intelligence. The size of the training staff and supporting facilities should be minimal at first. As more experience accumulates in the use of T-group and other techniques, the number of training candidates may increase to include the subordinates as well as peers of the original participants. The enlarged training groups might be constituted with foreign nationals as participants. T-groups of mixed nationalities, for example, may represent a microcosm of the overseas situation and provide many insights into the nature of cross-cultural interactions.

Because of the ambiguity and lack of structure of the T-group, and the attending opportunity for personal, social, or cultural confrontations, some trainees will have a stormy reaction in the T-group, especially in its early stages. Such discomfort, if not extreme, is actually a constructive factor, indicating that, for that individual, the training is personally involving or "taking effect." Conversely, ineffective training programs are often well-liked by trainees because of their soporific and entertaining qualities.

Traditionally, role-playing in management development training involves instructions about a problem in a concrete industrial setting, thus restricting the role-players to a limited frame of reference. Role-playing with a specific culture as the target may meet some needs of area training but may also obscure the fundamental behavioral changes required of the individual. The concrete and culturally prescribed answers may be used as substitutes for searching, open-minded, continuous learning in the overseas situation. Role-playing which simulates interaction in a non-specific culture (e.g., a composite Eastern or Middle Eastern culture) may be used to prevent such misconceptions and to provide alternative answers which are realistic and behaviorally relevant.

Role-playing takes a great deal of time. A staff of trainers has to select or develop plots suitable for the comprehension of a group of trainees. If perceptual and attitudinal components are emphasized as the targets of change,

then cultural contrasts must be built into the roles. This means that the trainer should have gathered from different sources basic information on the behavior and value components of the two cultures. Area experts will have to be consulted in order to train the actors to play the roles of foreign nationals. Before concrete descriptions can be woven into the plots, research must be conducted to discover heuristically useful critical incidents or problem situations from the field.

While T-group and role-playing provide rich emotional experiences by means of face-to-face interactions, the case method mainly requires the application of cognitive skills toward increased awareness of the value premises and assumptions in interactions with host nationals. The case method can be useful only if the trainer selects the case with a definite training objective in mind and provides a receptive environment to allow the trainee to achieve an understanding of the assumptions and points of view held by the main characters. It is obvious that the demands upon the trainer are large—he must specify his objectives, select an appropriate case, and help generate insightful interpretations with the trainees. This method has often been misused because the outward form of reading and discussing a case can be easily adhered to while the substantive material remains improperly interpreted or not integrated into the overall training objectives.

The overall advantages of human relations training may be summarized as follows:

(1) The kind of learning which takes place cannot be effectively achieved through more traditional and familiar approaches to training.

(2) Specific knowledge of the trainee's overseas destination is not essential. This permits the early training of units which can then be placed on call for overseas work with little or no advance notice. Subsequent area study of a specific country is likely thereafter to be more meaningfully pursued.

(3) The aim of the training is to provide the basis for continued future learning. Because this learning involves understanding of basic interpersonal and group processes, as well as cross-cultural, the training has implications for the trainee's entire career. To the extent that performance on work assignments involves interpersonal and interactional skills, human relations training becomes germane to their accomplishment.

A Suggested Beginning in the Selection or Combination of Methods

The development of an area training program starts with the specification of a set of training objectives. Some methods, on the basis of the analyses presented, appear to have more potential for effectiveness than do others; therefore, in the remainder of this report the most appropriate method or combination of methods to use in conjunction with three possible training objectives will be examined. Finally, a few suggestions will be given with respect to the problem of empirically evaluating the effects of a training program.

Objective 1: Understanding group processes affecting teamwork. This objective is basic to every human relations training effort. The T-group provides first-hand experience regarding formation of groups, goal-setting, problem-solving, and action planning by group members. The introduction of the T-group method, however, may be done gradually—certain characteristics of a T-group can be presented in connection with the use of the case method and role-playing. Many participants in area training expect the trainer to play an active part at first and to expose them to formal lectures on specific topics.

The case method can serve as the appropriate beginning for area training which involves the three techniques of human relations training. A well-written case will satisfy the participants' need for structure, and the familiar classroom skills of reading and discussing will be exercised. At an opportune time, however, the trainer may restructure the session in order to analyze not only the case itself, but also the interpersonal dynamics of the group as it engaged in discussion of the issues related to the case. A case method session can be managed so as to prepare the trainees for deep involvement with the role-playing and T-group to follow. The trainer might encourage the diagnoses by the group members of their own unconscious assumptions and value biases, differences in styles of goal setting and role taking, and the like.

Objective 2: Cultural assumptions affecting individual and organizational behavior overseas. If the case method had utilized material on management problems overseas without mentioning a specific culture, the participants might have already offered contrasting solutions that reflected their own cultural assumptions. The trainer could select the participants who represent the opposite points of view and invite them to a role-playing session which simulates cross-cultural interaction. This approach is consistent with the attempt to test cross-cultural concepts in the heat of social interaction.

Role-playing exercises built around the American's "job setting" overseas may focus on planning, negotiation, and conflict resolution with host nationals. In this way, the trainee will learn to face a situation involving less and less structure. Having already experienced certain aspects of a T-group, he might welcome, instead of dread, the formal T-group.

Objective 3: Overcoming resistance to change and refreezing. The T-group process has more potential than do other methods to bring to awareness the individual's fears about changing his behavior. Exposure of behavior and feedback in the form of reactions by others are maximized in a T-group session. The case study and role-playing sessions seldom reveal to the individual his habitual modes of responding to others and attacking a problem, unless the trainer points them out to him. The T-group gives the opportunity for testing alternative modes of behavior and observing their effect on others at once. The process of unfreezing is thereby set in motion. The cycle of unfreezing-moving-refreezing may now be exploited by the trainer to introduce during the session cross-cultural content learned outside of the T-group.

Problems of Empirical Assessment

The assessment of change attributable to human relations training offers the same types of problems as assessment of any live training input: the obtaining of comparable control groups, separation of "treatment" effects from base rate change, measuring instruments which sensitize the trainees, and small numbers of trainees who are often self-selected.

In addition, the goals of human relations training are difficult to reduce to operational terms and thus satisfactory criteria of training effects are difficult to specify or develop. "Real" change may not take place until long after the training has occurred. The criterion problem is a major methodological obstacle in assessing human relations training and clearly reflects the lack of a sufficiently precise conceptualization of the change processes involved.

Nevertheless, informed opinion on the benefits of such training is preponderantly favorable. Experienced trainers continue to attest to its usefulness in changing well-entrenched (and often otherwise refractory) modes of perception and behavior.

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